



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **CALIFORNIA MAN SENTENCED TO NEARLY 16 YEARS IN PRISON FOR SALES OF SUBPAR FLIGHT-CRITICAL AIRCRAFT PARTS AND FOR PLOT TO EXPORT ARMS TO CHINA** *Judge calls defendant “menace to worldwide air safety”*

SANTA ANA, Calif. - A 56-year-old Brea man has been sentenced to 188 months in federal prison for falsely certifying flight-critical aircraft parts sold by his company and for selling parts for military jet fighters to China.

Amanullah Khan was sentenced Monday evening by United States District Judge David O. Carter in Santa Ana. In addition to the prison term, Judge Carter ordered Khan to pay restitution of more than \$5.4 million.

The sentence comes after Khan pleaded guilty to charges stemming from two separate investigations. One of the cases involved the sale of aircraft parts that were fraudulently certified. The other investigation involved a plot to illegally export fighter jet components to undercover agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) who were posing as Chinese arms brokers.

Two years ago, in the midst of a jury trial, Khan pleaded guilty to 12 felony counts, including conspiracy and aircraft parts fraud, in the case involving the parts that were fraudulently certified. From 2000 to 2002, Khan operated an aircraft parts brokerage called United Aircraft & Electronics in Anaheim. Khan issued a series of false certifications and other documents that claimed aircraft parts he sold were something they were not. In just over one year, Khan's company earned approximately \$5 million by selling parts with fraudulent paperwork.

Specifically, Khan certified that a flight-critical helicopter part called a grip assembly for certain Bell helicopters was made of steel, when in fact the part was made of aluminum. While the aluminum grip assembly can be used on the helicopters, its useful life of 300 hours is significantly shorter than the 2,500 hours of useful life for the steel part. Before shipping the grip assemblies to his customer Khan altered them by removing and replacing data plates that reflected what the grip assembly was made of.

Khan also sold flight-critical jet engine parts called turbine blades and vanes. Khan sent certifications to his customers, including airworthiness certifications issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to certify that the parts were new. In fact, the blades and vanes had been previously

used on jet engines. At Khan's direction, cosmetic repair and re-conditioning work were performed on the blades and vanes to make them appear to be new, and Khan then sold the used parts in counterfeit packaging from the original manufacturer, Pratt & Whitney. Khan also falsely certified aircraft parts destined for use on U.S. military aircraft, including F-16 and F-4 fighters, as well as the C-130 Hercules.

In the second case, which was filed by the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, Khan pleaded guilty to conspiracy and violating the Arms Export Control Act. This second case was the result of Operation Dark Star, an investigation conducted by undercover agents with ICE. During Dark Star, Khan agreed to sell components for fighter aircraft and military helicopters to the undercover agents, who were posing as Chinese arms brokers.

Noting Khan's prior conviction for selling aircraft parts with false certifications, Judge Carter said that the defendant's return to falsely certifying aircraft parts demonstrated that he was a "menace to worldwide air safety."

A second man charged with Khan in the false certification case, Ziad Jamil Gammoh, 55, of Tustin, was sentenced two weeks ago by Judge Carter to 78 months in prison.

This case was investigated by the Department of Transportation, Office of the Inspector General; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Defense Criminal Investigative Service; U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigation; and the Federal Aviation Administration. These agencies were aided by the cooperative efforts of representatives of Bell Helicopter and Pratt & Whitney.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*